

Mr. Gene L. Dodaro

Acting Comptroller General

U.S. Government Accountability Office

441 G Street, NW

Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

We are pleased the Government Accountability Office has accepted the request of Senators Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) to investigate FEMA's methodology and policies for upgrading their flood maps. We want to make certain that our citizens are protected from the disastrous effects of flooding in the nation's prone areas and, therefore, support

FEMA's mission to improve their flood maps as part of the Flood Map Modernization Initiative (FMMI). The nation will benefit from more accurate and reliable maps. Nevertheless, the FMMI has missed the mark in communities across the nation. Flawed methodology and policies have led to faulty maps that force residents and businesses across the nation to pay costly, mandatory, and unnecessary flood insurance fees.

The State of Kansas has several communities facing significant changes to their flood maps. The community of Garden City, in Finney County, exemplifies the significant problems with the floodplain mapping program. Garden City has planned their growth responsibly, avoiding development in those areas which have been historically located within the Special Flood Hazard Area. The remapping places two drainage ditches and their surrounding areas within the redefined 100-year floodplain, even though this area was not included in the last three Flood Insurance Rate Maps that date all the way back to 1978. FEMA informed our offices that had Garden City not built the two drainage ditches, the area would not have been included in the floodplain. This result seems to contradict the purpose of the remapping and common sense. This discrepancy underscores the fact that the mapping process is flawed both in methodology and application.

The negative economic consequences stemming from errors made by FEMA in implementing the FMMI are tremendous - draining millions of dollars from local economies and significantly dropping the market and taxable value of huge portions of residential and business properties. We are grateful the Government Accountability Office will be investigating the national Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map program as implemented under the FMMI. We are hopeful the investigation will lead to improvements in the remapping process so that communities like Garden City will no longer have to bear the cost of FEMA's errors. We look forward to reviewing your findings and recommendations.

Respectfully,

Senator Sam Brownback

Senator Pat Roberts

Congressman Jerry Moran

Congressman Lynn Jenkins

Congressman Todd Tiahrt